**Great Bradley Annual Village Meeting held at St Mary’s Church 18th May 2011**

The Chairman Rowan Sylvester-Bradley welcomed about 42 people attending the meeting.

**Water Pipeline update:**

Representatives were present from both Suffolk & Essex Water and Farrans. They said that the 30m strip of topsoil has now been cleared to one side. Archaeological works were undertaken but nothing of any real interest has so far been discovered although it is continuing. Oxford Archaeological Unit which has been undertaking the surveys will be making presentations of their findings at later dates in various locations. Recent aerial pictures taken along the route were shown. The A143 is to be moled to avoid road closure. They have begun welding and laying the pipes in the trenches and are now half-way towards Kirtling Green from Hall Road. Hall Road will be closed for up to 5 days in June or July. Testing of the pipe will then take place and the make-good phase will then begin with the topsoil being replaced later in July or August. The only remaining project will be then replacement of the hedges.

**Minutes:**

The minutes of last year’s meeting 19th May 2010 were approved

**Matters arising:**

Local bus services. Gill Rodwell said that a commercial ABC timetabled service had now replaced the Link service to Haverhill. She missed the flexibility of the Link service. Because it was commercial the Link service had had to be withdrawn from that route. She said that some people now used Dial-a-Ride because they couldn’t use the ABC service. ABC has designated picks-up points so users in Little Bradley have to be able to walk up to the B1061 to wait there.

The link bus does still go to other destinations including Newmarket. However if the Link bus is returning from Newmarket they are not allowed to pick up people at the side of the road waiting to go to Haverhill.   
It would appear that the ABC service only has a 3 month licence at present.

**Suffolk Police:**

The Police had sent an apology for their absence but sent a report. The number of crimes in Great Bradley fell last year to 3 compared to the year before which was 14. Current Safer Neighbourhood Team priorities are not particularly relevant to GB but with a low crime rate that was unsurprising. Parishioners are urged to attend the Safer Neighbourhood Team priority setting meeting in Risby on June 9th if they wish to influence current priorities.

**Suffolk County Council:**

County Councillor Jane Midwood said it was lovely to be in the beautiful St Mary’s church and that she hoped that the excellent village hall would soon be restored to its former glory:

**Council Tax**There is to be no rise in the County Council element of your Council Tax this year despite the big loss in government grant. This has been achieved by greater efficiency and by cutting waste and bureaucracy and back office costs. Senior management costs have been reduced by around £1.5 million over the last financial year.   
**The New Strategic Direction and new Council leader**Implementation of the NSD is beginning but so too is the slowing down. There had been a great deal of concern among councillors and parishes that the speed of change was too fast — nowhere was this more obvious than in Clare. In order to make the transition easier, particularly where services and assets are being divested dedicated officers have been appointed who will work with the County Councillors.

Councillor Mark Bee has been elected Leader of the Conservative group on SCC and he will become leader of Suffolk County Council following the Full Council meeting on May 26th. Mark has already made some significant alterations to the pace of change; he has my full support and importantly, cross-party support too.

**Safer Neighbourhood Tasking meetings:**I have chaired these for some time now but it looks as though they are going to change as our police officers are moved around all over again. The most recent public meeting was in March where we heard a presentation on the role of voluntary groups within the rural villages. Several representatives from local Neighbourhood Watch groups attended and Bob Steel, from Hundon, the new NW Area Coordinator introduced himself to the meeting. The next meeting will be at Risby Village Hall on Thursday 9th June, 7.00 — 9.00pm.   
Neighbourhood Watch groups have a vital role to play in rural policing and I believe that they need greater support from all sides — communications need to be improved so that residents are alerted quickly when suspicious vehicles or activity are spotted.   
**Clare Castle Country Park:**The meeting on April 7th was well attended by several different interest groups. I have been told that the National Trust is still keen to take part in talks and has dropped out of future talks at Brandon Country Park. Judy Terry, the portfolio holder is very supportive of the wishes of local people to retain and improve the beautiful park.

**Library:**As many people will have seen in the **EADT** there is a major rethink going on about “divestment” of the counties Libraries. Thank goodness the old adage act in haste, repent at leisure has come into play.   
**Street Lighting:**A consultation on street lighting will be underway soon with a view to saving energy and cutting light pollution. Turning off street lighting in some areas and dimming lighting has already been trialled in other parts of the country and has not been found to be detrimental to safety or increased crime.   
**Buses:**   
I would be very interested to hear from residents about their experiences of using the Demand Responsive Transport bus. Generally speaking the first months of the service seem to have been a success, however, the problems arising because of the new ABC service are disappointing to hear and that these shortcomings should be communicated to Tracey Vobe at Endeavour House.   
**Wind Farm:**I attended the meeting called STOC (Stop Turbines Over Clare) last month and was pleased to see the enormous support from those opposing BTs plans. It will be interesting to find out the reason for the recently announced postponement of the BT Open day:   
Very best wishes to all residents — it has been a pleasure to serve as your County Councillor over the last six years. Please get in touch if you feel I can help.

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council:**

Robert Clifton-Brown said that there had been a recent successful election. He was back on the Planning Committee. There had been an application from Nettlesham for a straw and woodchip grinding process which the Officers had been in favour of. He was pleased that the Officers were also in favour of the new development at the old Project site in Haverhill. The development at Hanchet end in Haverhill has gone through the Concept Statement and will be a big new asset for the town. The next project is the NW Haverhill development.

**Annual report from the Parish Council:**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley presented the Parish Council’s achievements during the past year and plans for the coming year, along with an analysis of how the council spends the money collected via Council Tax. Key projects for the coming year are a new footpath map and information board, re-landscaping of the Village Garden and Millennium Oak area, a higher post for the village sign, possibly a lower basketball hoop or similar in the play area for younger children, another fireworks and bonfire night on 4or 5 November (the vast majority at the meeting preferred Saturday 5th), and to look into the possibility of an event for the Diamond Jubilee around 4 June 2012. We are still short of one councillor – if you might be interested, please speak to any councillor or to John Barnett.

**Village Hall:**

Edward Fletcher said that the repairs were in the hands of the Loss Assessor. Work on the floor is likely to commence in about 6 weeks and should take about 4 weeks to complete. It will be a sprung Maple floor similar to that which was there before. Various works are being undertaken to help prevent a repeat of the flood in future. The heating is being upgraded at the same time as all the other works. There is to be a re-opening party and the most likely date at this point in time is in September.

**Community Event**. Edward said that the Open Weekend ‘Sportathon’ was going to be re-run this year after the postponement last year. John Barnett reminded the meeting that the weekend needs to be run on 23/24th July to comply with the grant conditions. If it’s not possible to meet that date then the grant of £250 will need to be repaid. Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that the timing is short so that information on this needs to go in this edition of the Bugle.

**Village Website:**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that Mike Brophy couldn’t be here this evening so he was saying a few words on his behalf. Firstly Mike should be thanked for all his hard work on the website which is admired from people all over the world. There had been a good meeting between Mike and 3 members of the Parish Council where Mike had outlined the switch of web-hosting/editing which will make it easier for others to edit their sections of the site.

**Neighbourhood Watch:**

David Evans said that Sandra Dolby sent her apologies. The Neighbourhood watch Committee was formed in Autumn, 2010 after a presentation given by a Neighbourhood Watch Representative. Villagers present agreed that making Great Bradley a Neighbourhood Watch area was a good idea. Over time, eight people volunteered to be village co-ordinators: John Barnett, Gill Dunn, Carole Durrant, David Evans, Keith Willington, Jill Rodwell, Roy Smith, Sandra Dolby. Each co-ordinator is responsible for designated area of the village although East Green does not have a representative in spite of our repeated efforts to recruit someone. The committee meets regularly to discuss issues concerning crime prevention. So far we have:   
• delivered crime prevention materials to most houses.   
• placed a regular Neighbourhood Watch feature in The Bugle concerning safety of properly.   
• written an article in the Bugle to remind villagers of what to do if they see something suspicious.   
• Neighbourhood Watch signs have been placed on 3 entrance roads to the village.   
• We are in regular contact with police liaison. P.C. Patricia Sinclair and P.C. Kayla Packman are in contact and regularly attend our meetings.   
Our aim is to keep the village safe and crime free and to inform villagers of any suspicious activity.

**Community Speedwatch**John Barnett said that Speedwatch had been doing steadily in Great Bradley although in a neighbouring village the original enthusiasm and frequent speedchecks from last year seemed to have waned somewhat. He would like to thank Geoffrey Vollam, Elaine Bareham and Keith Willington who help to make up our team of 4 in the village. We were lucky that the last time we were out in April, 2 Great Bradley residents stopped to thank us for what we were doing and were immediately recruited and we hope to see them in the team at some point after all the paperwork and training is completed.   
We have done 4 speedchecks in Great Bradley in the past year and clocked 20 speeding drivers. Although the idea really is not catch people speeding but to educate and make people aware that this is a 30mph area. The current members of our Speedwatch group are: Great Bradley, Great & Little Thurlow, Great Wratting, Cowlinge, Withersfield, Barrow, Horringer, Fornham all Saints and Stoke by Clare.   
Thanks to the generosity of County Councillors we now have 4 speed guns, numerous jackets and 16 warning road signs.

**Great Bradley Estate matters:**

Charles Ryder said that the pipeline was the most important item at present. He has a meeting with their representatives every Friday. They are about a month ahead of schedule at the moment helped by the very dry weather. There has been a great deal of pushing and debates behind the scenes to ensure things happened as they should. On his land only 5m of hedgerows (instead of the 30m elsewhere) have been removed and he will put them back (rather than Farrans) to ensure that correct species are used. In this regard the hedgerow survey has been extremely useful in identifying what species would be required.   
His thanks go as always to Stephen Steward who is such a vital part of the organisation. He is able to get some help now with the arrival of Colin Potter   
BT has desecrated a number of trees which is completely unacceptable and the consequence is that Charles is pushing for further undergrounding of these services together with the electricity supply

The Farm walk is taking place on 4th June.   
The lack of rain in recent months means that it has now been drier this year than it was in 2003 and even 1976.

**Reports from other village groups/organisations:**

1. **Parochial Church Council.** Sue Ireland said that since John Ely left they have been in interregnum. There are 4 members of the PCC - Sue Ireland, Geoffrey Vollam, Gill Brown and Keith Willington. They have a sizeable quota to pay every year to the Diocese but so far they have managed it. The fete is a tremendous help with money raising at £2,000+ each year. They are planning on this year having a steel band, vintage cars and bread. Their thanks go again to the Ryder family for the use of their lovely garden. Thanks also go the Parish Council which looks after the grasscutting in the churchyard.  
   Sue thanked all the hard working people who help to keep the church clean and looking so pretty with all the flowers.
2. **Bowls Club.** Keith Willington said that the club now meet at Thurlow having joined their club temporarily. The whole thing is meant to be fun and not really competitive. They have 7 full time members and they are looking for more members particularly men if possible to help with the matting.
3. **Art Group.** The Art Group has continued to flourish under the expert tuition of local artist Jan Couling. As a result of the flooding of the Village Hall during the severe Winter weather we transferred our venue to Thurlow Village Hall which, sadly, resulted in us having to shorten our sessions to eight weeks rather than ten due to the increased cost of hall hire. Our current session ended on the 10 May and we will resume again in September. Hopefully, here in Bradley.   
   There will be an exhibition of our work in the Church on the day of the Fete on the 10 July.   
   New members are always welcome.
4. **Scottish Dancing Class**. The Scottish Country dancing sessions have continued throughout the past year and all those attending have had great fun. We’ve even learnt a bit too!   
   We have been holding our classes in Thurlow Village Hall since our own has been unavailable and this has proved to be very satisfactory. However, we can’t wait to get back into Great Bradley as soon as possible. Numbers have dropped unfortunately but we always have enough to make up a few sets for the dances each week. The drop in numbers has nothing to do with the venue however.   
   I think our only claim to fame has been that we discovered the flood in the Village Hall and set the wheels in motion for the clear up.
5. **Workers Educational Association**. Last September Simon Doney gave us opportunity to look at the Social History of Britain, 1800 – 1914, a period when this country was the ‘Workshop of the World’. With the growth of centres of industry and the flight to the towns from the country because of rural poverty, disease and squalor were rife and social conditions improved only slowly. Many Acts were passed, e.g. limiting the hours of work for women and children and to ameliorate the harsh working environments, but were often ineffective because they lacked penalties or enforcement, and would cost the factory owners money! It took 100 years for the major improvements to occur that are largely responsible for the more pleasant and safe employment conditions of today.

In January we had to move from the Village Hall, but thanks to the good offices of Gill Brown we were able to hold the next course at the Black Bull in Balsham! This was Part 1 of the ’History of the English Language’ with Rosemary Williams from Linton, and the 26 people attending included some from Linton and Balsham. We started with the origins of our language, by way of Anglo-Saxon, such as Beowulf, through the Early English of Chaucer to the age of Shakespeare.

Next September we hope to return to the Village Hall where, by popular demand, Peter Goodwin will enlighten us about Shakespeare’s Heritage in Music – his influence on composers. (Can you think of a single writer who has had more influence on composers?) We have had Peter Goodwin talk to us before – his lectures will be well illustrated with audio and video examples. If you are able to come along on Wednesday mornings I am sure you will find it a good experience.

We look forward to January 2012 and a course on the ’10 Greatest Films’, with Laurence Staig, so you see we do have a widely based curriculum at WEA. And in September 2012, again in response to the fervent clamour of our members, we are hoping Rosemary Williams will take us through Part 2 of the ‘History of the English Language’.   
The WEA would not be viable in Great Bradley without the loyal support of Gill Brown, Anne Smith, the tireless work of Peter Smith our chairman and secretary and Alan Bampton our treasurer from Burwell, so our grateful thanks are due to them.

1. **Afternoon Club**. Anne Smith said that the Coffee Caravan is coming again tomorrow and they are meeting on Clarendale with them. The Club has more people coming now and they normally meet on the second Thursday every month from 2.30pm - 4.30pm. With the village hall out of action Charles Ryder has very kindly offered the use of one of his office rooms for their meetings. Once the village hall is back in commission then the gentle stretching class/flexible friends will be back.
2. **Photo Club, bird survey and Barn Owl box**. Les Bunyan said that he was pleased to say that 10 people turn up regularly to the photo club meetings. In his bird survey he has counted 82 species in total in the village in the last 10 years. The Barn Owl box has already been used and a pair bred last year in it.

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said it was very pleasing to see all these organisations doing so well in the village and thanked them for their presence tonight and the information.

**Litter pick:**

Geoffrey Vollam said that it had been a very successful litter pick. He thanked the 22 volunteers from the village including several children. Our PCSO Kayla Packman had also turned out and there had been considerable publicity in 3 local papers. John Barnett said that the ‘hit squad’ from St Edmundsbury Borough Council had collected the rubbish and also cleaned up the ‘hill’ at the same time within 24 hours.

**Hedgerow survey:**

John Barnett said that they didn’t manage to do quite as well last year as we did in our first year. We only managed to get through 25surveys compared to 82 previously. So that still leaves 134 to do and time is now beginning to run out. No more new Parishes are being accepted into the Survey Scheme and those that are still to complete are being urged to do so. So it’s best foot forward this year to do as many as we can before the inevitable guillotine falls.   
He said he would like to thank all those who have helped over the year - Charles Ryder, without whose assistance really none of this would have got off the ground at all, Anne Smith, Les & Anne Bunyan and my wife Maureen. We have had a new offer of assistance this year from Mrs Evans from the Stable House which is very welcome.

**A Village Face-lift:**

Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that the Parish Council’s Village Face Lift project had resulted in daffodils being planted on the triangle at the top of Hall Road thanks to Charles Ryder and to the tidying up and planting of the verge opposite Bluebell Cottage thanks to Ron and Cathy Bell. This project will continue with the new plans for the Village Garden and Millennium Oak area. New ideas are always welcome!

**Winter Gritting.**

John Barnett said that this item is on the agenda for the simple reason that he was appalled at the dangerous state of our pavements in the village during the big freeze last Winter. It would appear that society is more concerned with the safety of people’s cars rather than the safety of people themselves. Lots of money, time and effort is spent on gritting roads but none whatsoever on gritting pavements. Goodness knows how many people broke arms and wrists last Winter because of slipping on untreated pavements.

He was very impressed with a report from Sudbury when they asked for volunteers to grit the pavements and 200 people came forward. They appeared to be doing the grit spreading the hard way with spades, whereas he had seen small machines that you push along which do the spreading for you and in a much more controlled way. There was one on sale at a store in Haverhill for a little over £100 and others are advertised between £300 and £1000. The lower priced machines can only handle absolutely dry material which is expensive whereas the most expensive machines can handle damp grit such as supplied to our grit bin.

He wondered whether this is something we should we consider doing in Great Bradley. We could either buy a machine ourselves or possibly go in with another local Council an example of which was given in today’s EADT which states ‘Bures Parish Council in conjunction with St Mary’s Parish Council has obtained access to a salt gritter that can be called upon to treat the village pavements.’

He asked the meeting whether there was support for this and a number indicated that was the case. However, when asked how many might volunteer for actually assisting treating the pavements, only one person came forward.

**Forthcoming events:**

The following events were notified:

* Farm Walk –Saturday 4th June and anyone wishing to join in should please let Charles Ryder know.
* The fete this year is on 10th July.
* Community event weekend of 23/24th July

Gill Brown said that there was a local fair in Linton this week which might be an idea for any Jubilee event for next year. She has their contact details.

**Any other ideas/problems etc:**

Amanda Troop said that dog mess on the Recreation Area was increasing again. She wondered if another dog bin at the top of the field might help. Rowan Sylvester-Bradley suggested that if the person(s) responsible were not using the existing bin it was unlikely that they would use another.

The dog bin at the top of Water Lane was reported as overflowing. Stephen Steward said that the bin at the Bottom of Hall Road was regularly emptied so there is a suspicion that St Edmundsbury Borough Council records may be missing the bin in Water Lane.

Richard Bradberry said that he had had several delivery drivers confused by their GPS directions to houses in parts of Evergreen Lane. He said that Matthews lane originally may have gone down to the B1061. Rowan Sylvester-Bradley said that there is a need to sort it out as we have a request in to St Edmundsbury Borough Council for a new street nameplate to replace the existing dilapidated one. If we need to change the name then St Edmundsbury Borough Council need to be aware.

The Chairman thanked everyone for taking the time to come to the meeting and it was declared closed at 9.55pm

Signed: Chair date: